CANADA AND "THE NEW AMERICAN CENTURY"

Draft of a "mission statement" to be considered by the Carsen-Simard film team meeting in Toronto on April 30

Found on different pages of the New York Times on April 20, 2003:

"Billy Graham planted a seed in my heart...We believe that freedom is a gift from Almighty God"—George W. Bush

"The true God is the God of the Bible, not of the Koran....Islam is a very wicked and evil religion...We wait to reach out to save the Iraqis in the name of Jesus"—Rev. Franklin Graham, son of Billy, who led the prayers at the Bush inauguration in 2001, and at the Good Friday service at the Pentagon , 2003.

"Shi'ite imams in Iraq, representing a majority of Iraqis, are preaching a strict adherence to the Islamic legal code based on the Koran, as in Iran, and are demanding that the US leave Iraq"

"The US is planning a long-term military relationship with the emerging government of Iraq, one that would grant the Pentagon permanent access to military bases, senior Bush administration officials say....In combination with the continuing US presence in Afghanistan, this would virtually surround Iran with a web of American influence".

Found on the Internet on March 27:

"Canada agreed to send up to 2000 troops to Afghanistan to free US troops for service in Iraq....Canadian weapons production is thoroughly integrated into the US war machine. Virtually every major US weapons system, and weapons delivery system, includes at least some Canadian-made components"—Richard Saunders, Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade (COAT), Ottawa

Read in the Montreal Gazette on April 24:

"Canada's peacekeeping experience means it can play a role restoring order in Iraq," Deputy Prime Minister John Manley said. So far, police departments in Ottawa, Edmonton and Medicine Hat have expressed interest in sending officers. Since the 1990s, Canada has contributed about 1200 police officers to trouble spots around the world.

Heard in le Centre St. Pierre, Montreal, on April 23:

"The massive world-wide anti-war demonstrations of 15 February, 2003, marked the birth of a world moral conscience, capable of building a new civil society. It was conceived in the anti-nuclear movement of the sixties, grew in the ecological and feminist movements, and came to full term in the anti-globalizatoin movement. It will take the form of permanent social innovation on the municipal level, and will result in international institutions devoted to eliminating poverty and injustice"—Riccardo Petrella, prominent Italian political scientist

It is now evident that Bush's pre-emptive strike on Iraq was the last dramatic step in the implementation of a new policy of unilateral action that has included the renunciation of international agreements like the Kyoto accord, the International Court of Justice, the Ottawa accord banning the production and use of land-mines, the Geneva convention banning biological weapons, the Outer Space Treaty banning the use of weapons in the stratosphere, and the treaty banning defensive nuclear weapons. The increasing integration of much of the world economy into that of the US through free-trade agreements has made it difficult for other governments to denounce this policy. That is why the opposition of civil society to the invasion of Iraq has had to take the form of demonstrations on the streets. And that is why leaders of the peace and anti-globalization movements have come to realize that their goals are the same, and that the time has come to merge. AQOCI, the umbrella group for Quebec's 175 NGOs, and the main sponsor of Montreal's huge peace rallies this winter, has called for a day-long conference in Montreal on May 6 to get that merge started. There must be similar meetings taking place in other parts of Canada.

As the US continues to expand its military and economic hegemony throughout the world, resistance is bound to increase, and so is chaos and fear, and so is an international movement for peace and social justice. Our filming in five cities across Canada during the war has established characters whose first involvement in the anti-war movement could pull them now into a larger movement for peace and social justice, as they face the new issues emerging from the war:

(1) the chaos in Iraq—how will our characters react if Canada is called upon to provide a contingency of police?

(2) the lack of food and medecine—how will our characters react if foreign aid can only reach Iraq through channels controlled by the US?

(3) the preference of the Shi'ite majority in Iraq for a theocratic state on the model of Iran—how will our characters react if US makes efforts to avoid democratic elections?

(4) the possibility of civil war breaking out between Kurds, Arabs, Sunnis and Shi'ites—how will our characters react if Canada is invited to provide military peace-keepers to serve under US command, as in Kosovo?

(5) the probability that the US will now make a unilateral attempt to force Iran into the camp of "freedom and democracy"—how will our characters react to the increasing irrelevance of the UN Security Council?

(6) the probability that terrorist acts of revenge will now increase, as they did after the first Gulf War--how will our characters react as Canada is pulled into Bush's tightened network of "homeland security"?

(7) the probability that the US will impose economic retributions on countries that do not cooperate with its new agenda, as Secretary of State Powell made clear on April 24 speaking about France—how will our characters react if that policy results in lay-offs in the Canadian auto, forestry or mining industries?

Reported in the London Telegraph, April 13:

"This 4th World War will last considerably longer than either World War I or World War II for us. Hopefully it won't be the full four decades of the Cold War. Countries that don't have democratic systems will face a confident US which now knows that regime change is possible with minimum casualties" --James Woolsey, former director of the CIA, now information director for the provisional government of Iraq.

The Iraq war has made it clear that the world has now entered "the New American Century". The Project for the New American Century (or "PNAC") was the name given by the ideologues of the US right wing to a plan developed by Dick Cheney, Colin Powell and Donald Rumsfeld during the Clinton years, and which called for the use of "overwhelming force" for securing control over areas of "strategic significance". It was an idea promoted in the media owned by Rupert Murdoch, Rev Jun Myung Moon, and Conrad Black (source: The New Statesman, April 7).

Canada will be establishing a place for itself in the New American Century over the next few months as it has to react to the issues that arise from the US occupation of Iraq. It is a critical time in the history of this country, as Bush has declared that "you are either for us or against us". We can decide to play on the emperor's side, or we can decide to join the international movement for peace and social justice. It is a great time to be documentary film-makers. We can work with the characters we have established during the war to make a film series that will help build a world free of both terrorism (the war of the poor), and war (the terrorism of the rich).

Martin Duckworth
April 25